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BY Tom Rooney
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Recent articles in this newspaper highlighted local road projects financed by last year's \$787 billion "stimulus" bill. Although paving these roads is good for our area, the stimulus was supposed to be more than a road improvement bill.

When President Barack Obama and congressional Democrats sold this bill of goods, they claimed it would put people to work and get our economy moving again. By that benchmark, it has unequivocally failed.

While I'm happy our district is getting some of this funding — after all, we're paying for it — I'm disappointed that we won't get our money's worth, because these projects will never create the jobs or economic growth that our district needs.

Seventeen months after the stimulus passed, unemployment is higher than it was in January 2009. Despite almost \$1 trillion in stimulus spending, more Americans are out of work than when this boondoggle began.

The articles note that without stimulus funding, our counties could not afford these projects. Neither can the federal government! Taxpayers already are on the hook for a record \$1.4 trillion deficit in 2009. Our national debt passed \$13 trillion this month and is continuing to skyrocket.

Now, despite this back-breaking debt, President Obama is asking Congress to pass a second stimulus bill with \$50 billion in "emergency" spending. Stimulus Two would bail out states and local governments, again, that are facing potential jobs cuts. These are the same jobs that

Stimulus One allegedly “saved.”

The first stimulus didn't work, so we're going to try it again?

Congressional Democrats have said that instead of allocating new money for Stimulus Two, we should use unspent money from Stimulus One. While that's preferable to Obama's free-spending proposal, it still won't create the long-term employment we need to grow our economy. In fact, their proposal confirms what I have said about Stimulus One all along:

The bailout wasn't timely: Seventeen months later, billions of dollars are unspent.

The money wasn't targeted: Funds went to liberal spending programs that did nothing to create jobs.

The jobs are temporary, but the bailouts never end: Money to bail out state and local governments ran out, so the “saved” jobs are back at risk. The solution? A second bailout.

What's next? Will Congress continue to pass “emergency” bailout legislation to save the same jobs over and over?

Rather than bailing out states or funding projects that will, at best, create a few temporary jobs, we need to reverse course with the remaining stimulus funds.

My bill, the Economic Freedom Act, would replace the failed stimulus spending with targeted tax cuts to help small businesses grow and create jobs. This is the stimulus we need — not bailouts and earmarks, but relief so small businesses can get the wheels of our economy turning again.

Creating permanent jobs and producing real economic growth is the only way to protect states

from coming back to Washington, hat in hand, asking for one bailout after another. I hope that Congress will learn from the failure of Stimulus One and save American taxpayers from the sequel.

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